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# **GENDER ASSESSMENT**

## **Namibia Country Strategic Plan: 2004 - 2010**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

The history of colonial rule in Namibia was characterized by dispossession, oppression and poverty. Under apartheid, and the ensuing protracted war of liberation, the indigenous population suffered severely with the apartheid policies serving to accentuate the racial and ethnic divisions within society to the extent that at independence communities were segregated geographically, economically and socially. This legacy of inequality continues to manifest itself in the severe income disparities and unequal access to productive resources in Namibia today.

Gender discrimination is the only common principle cutting across the lines of ethnicity, geography and power in Namibia. Women in Namibia continue to be disadvantaged at all levels of Namibian life: in employment, influence, power, and wealth. Indigenous women suffered most severely under apartheid. They shared the suffering of men from racial discrimination, administrative neglect and economic under-development, but as women, they also suffered from cultural subordination on the basis of their sex.

GRN policies emanating from the Constitution recognize the importance of gender and enshrine the principle of equality. While this provides the legal framework within which to effect social change, it remains strictly on the books and has as yet had little impact on changing attitudes and practices that are embedded within culture and tradition.

### **1.1 Why a gender analysis?**

Gender analysis is part of the Agency's policy development process. It is an analytical tool that assesses the differential impact of proposed and existing policies, programs and legislation on women and men by considering the different life situations (different socio-economic realities) of women and men.

Gender analysis recognizes that the realities of women and men's lives are different and that equal opportunity does not necessarily mean equal results. The challenge is to anticipate the results of policies, programs and legislation and ensure they are as equitable as possible for all women and all men.

The analysis presented here has been severely constrained by the lack of specific and detailed socio-cultural data prior to independence on which to underpin the developments that have occurred in the last twelve years. Where available, much of this literature has been subsumed and obscured by the legacy of apartheid. With this qualifier, this gender assessment therefore sets out to provide a summary, based on available data, of the:

- 1) Current state of gender equity within Namibia;
- 2) Gender Analysis to identify gender needs on the range of technical issues being considered;
- 3) Recommended actions necessary to respond to these needs and enhance gender equity; and
- 4) Recommendations on gender mainstreaming within the mission.

## **1.2 Methodology**

This assessment has been conducted as a desk review of SO specific mission documents and partner reports. The GRN Gender Plan of Action and other government reports were also reviewed. Discussions were held with each SO team in an effort to identify existing opportunities and barriers to the promotion of a gender sensitive approach to the new country strategic plan.

## 2.0 A Historical Perspective

South Africa occupied the German colony of South West Africa during World War I and, from 1920 administered it as a League of Nations mandate, and then continuing with its occupation after the Second World War, in contravention of international rulings, when it annexed the territory. In 1966, the guerilla group SWAPO launched a war of independence for Namibia but it was not till 1988 that under the UN Peace Plan for the region, South Africa agreed to end its administration, enabling independence in 1990.

The effects of apartheid that characterized the pre-independence era are still felt in present day Namibia. The country has a small but widely dispersed population of 1.8 million people. 87.5 % of the population is black, 6.5% is colored and 6% white. Over 60% of the total population is concentrated in the four northern regions of the country. The 5% white minority is situated mainly in the central and southern regions, receives 70% of the GDP and accounts for 48% of national consumption. This relatively small national population, in terms of scattering and density, speaks 11 languages. Of these, the San are the earliest occupants of Namibia, coming south from central Africa over 2,300 years ago. Other waves of migration followed till the Europeans arrived in the 1860s. Over 85% Herero and 50% Nama were killed in the 1904 and 1920s uprisings against the Germans. The Ovambo, the largest group in Namibia today, did not fall under the direct rule of the Germans, although economic conditions forced migration of male labor to the mines and to the ranches in central and southern Namibia. Under South African control, white settlement expanded and the exploitation of the black majority was legalized and extended to the north.

### 2.1 The Socio – Cultural Situation

Namibia has one of the most unequal societies in the world with a *Gini co-efficient* of 0.70 in 1996 (UNDP 2000: 20). The ratio of per capita income between the top five per cent and the bottom is approximately 50:1 (ibid). 130 years of colonization have left distinct sociological, social and cultural marks on all the ethnic and social groups in Namibia (Koep: 2002a) while apartheid produced a system of inequalities where 55% of the aggregate income accrued to less than 10% of the population, who also received the benefits of the social infrastructure in education and health while the rest of the country remained impoverished.

In a comparison of Namibia's 13 administrative regions there is stark evidence of the social and economic disparities that existed and which still persist. Nearly all of the historically disadvantaged Namibians (HDNs), that is 44.3% of the population, live in the northern regions of Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto while 15.4% live in Caprivi and Kavango, a total of 59.7. The 20% of the population that lives in Khomas and Erongo, including the majority of the white population, have more advantageous living standards (USAID 2002b: 23).

*The Namibian Human Development Report* provides HDI<sup>1</sup> and HPI data disaggregated by region, urban versus rural location, gender, and language group thereby illustrating the massive inequalities in wealth and development in the country and challenges to be addressed in undoing the colonial and apartheid legacies. When disaggregated by language groups the disparities are revealing: Europeans – Afrikaans, English and Germans – are high on the index while indigenous African language speakers are deprived, with the San the most marginalized and deprived of all, falling far below the human development category.

Except in Erongo and Khomas, the southern regions that are better off than any other in the country, 33% of the population will not live to 40 years, 40% of the population has no access to safe drinking water and no access to health facilities. The Europeans live with less than 10% poverty while the San live with 60% poverty, and in between there are five groups representing 90% of the Namibian populations with poverty rates between 20 and 30 percent (quoted in Bauer: 27).

## **2.2 An Overview of the Situation of Gender in Namibia**

Gender divisions within Namibia are far from homogeneous. Diverse pre-war experiences of gender differences partly explain this heterogeneity. In addition, during the armed struggle, 1966-1990, changes occurred in the social environment, affecting gender relations, but to greatly varying degrees, reflecting the unevenness, both geographically and temporally. In particular, civilians had different experiences of the period of the liberation struggle. Despite the post-independence efforts to improve the social, political and economic position of Namibian women, there continue to be considerable discrepancies in the economic and social condition of men and women.

### *2.2.1 Key Gender Statistics*

Women constitute 51% of the population and are slightly more in the rural areas at 52%. The ratio of males to females varies considerably between regions due to migratory patterns of men seeking employment in urban areas. Females head 39% of all households with 43% in the rural areas and 32% in urban areas. These female headed-households average approximately half the income levels in male-headed households (NDP2: 609).

Data from the 1992 National Demographic Health Survey (DHS), that is the source of the NDP data, indicates that the fertility rate was 5.4 per woman but this also reflects regional variations between the rural at 6.3 and urban at 4.0 areas. On average, Namibian women have their first child at 21 while the median age at first marriage is 25 indicating

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<sup>1</sup> The UNDP Human Development index (HDI) measure progress in development over 3 components that include: longevity, knowledge and access to resources while the Human Poverty Index (HPI) is measured by the proportion of the population deprived of the means for human development such as longevity (will not reach the age of 40), illiteracy in adults and lack a decent standard of living such as no access to safe water, health facilities and malnourishment in children. In Namibia, a fourth element, households with less than 20% of their income available for non-food items (Bauer: 24).

that many women give birth before marriage. In 1992, 51% of women aged 15-49 were not married, 27% were married, 15% were living with a man in an informal union, and 7% were widowed, divorced or separated. Infant mortality rate was a high 61.5 death per 1,000 live births while maternal mortality in 1992 was 225 per 100,000 live births.

National gender distinctions in school enrollment are not clear as they obscure regional disparities. It is, however known that female enrollment in some educational regions declines at the secondary school level and there is a lower rate of promotion for girls in the higher grades. Agriculture employs 47% of all those over 15 years of whom 51% of workingwomen and 45% of working men employed in the agricultural sector. There are also a substantial number of females employed in private households, 81%, 69% in health and social work and 60% in education.

### *2.2.2 Gender Roles*

In the rural areas women are primarily providers of necessary food and crops for the household. They also produce cash crops for market and earn a household income. They provide more than 90% of the labor for agricultural production. Women have little access to scientific and technological information and facilities and are mainly dependent on simple traditional technologies such as the labor-intensive mortar and pestle, grinding stones, sun drying, wood fuel, hoes and axes that are widespread in cattle areas. The more efficient, simple and environmentally friendly technologies such as hammer mills, oil-presses, biomass and oxen technology has not been introduced to them.

Across cultural groups, women are seen as subordinate to men, who must make the major contributions to their communities, have many children, look after their families, and whose decisions have to be obeyed (UNAM undated: 16). Women are socialized to be obedient, tend to the household and take care of children. Women still carry the main responsibility for maintaining households, families and communities, both in the urban and rural areas. Extensive migration for labor to the urban areas has distorted the structure of rural households, which are now characterized by old people, women and children ranging from 40% - 49% (Koep 2002a:6). As if to underline this, the ratio of adult males to women was 1:1 in the peri-urban areas and 1:2 in the rural areas. The majority of subsistence farmers are women who, due to the legal, economic and cultural restrictions, are denied access to resources such as land, cattle, cash, credit and technical training. Both women and men in communal lands have usufruct rights from the government although male traditional leaders have rights to allocate land to households. The laws of inheritance still discriminate against women resulting in widows losing their property and being forced off their land.

Gender stereotyping pervades all levels of Namibian society. Gender roles are narrowly defined through social institutions that include the family, church, schools, and culture. Namibia is socially very conservative and holds strong traditional beliefs and practices. The majority of the population are practicing Christians who accept conventional church teachings on personal matters and its internalized patriarchal views on gender relations (Koep: 2002b). The majority of the black Namibian women have thus experienced triple

oppression based on race, class and gender, re-enforced by the Church's paternalistic attitude. Many continue to experience multiple forms of discrimination in terms of ethnicity, culture, education, literacy and geographical location, disability, marital status, ability to bear sons and sexual orientation (ibid.). Changing social norms are contributing to fathers avoiding obligations for caring for their children. The extended family system is being eroded by changing life styles and HIV/AIDS and poor families are further stretched by the need to care for terminally ill family members. Gender inequality is also a contributing factor as women's rights are often denied. There is a general recognition that women, as a group, constitute a major section of the community that have been disadvantaged at several levels including the effects of sexism, patriarchy and racism.

### *2.2.3 Violence Against Women*

Violence and abuse against women, adolescent girls and young children remains a widespread problem coupled with high levels of alcohol use and abuse among adults as well as youth. Enforcement officers have limited skills in dealing with the survivors of abuse and court facilities are not survivor friendly. The NGOs that have established some monitoring and training programs are limited to the urban areas. Central to the issue of sexual abuse and violence are unequal gender relations where women are in a subordinate position to men, often economically dependent, with little bargaining or negotiating power, particularly on sexual matters. There has been progress in responding to the issue of violence against women. Although most of it remains on paper it includes: passing the Combating of Rape Act, drafting the Namibian HIV/AIDS Charter of Rights; and drafting the law of domestic violence and another on vulnerable witnesses.

## **2.3 Institutional Mechanisms and Policies for Gender Advancement**

The Namibian Constitution makes special reference to women and their concerns and mandates that all persons are equal before the law and that there'll be no discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status (Bauer: 28). It goes further and enacts the affirmative action legislation noting that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and need special support to play a fuller and more equal role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

In the twelve years since independence considerable progress has been made to the legal framework, institutions and law reform. The Ministry of Women's Affairs and Child Welfare was created in 2000, upgraded from the Department of Women Affairs established in 1990 within the Office of the President where it had the role of bringing gender issues into the national agenda, identifying priorities for action and facilitating communication between women and the government.

A Women and Law Committee (WLC), under the Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC) overseeing the compliance of new and the review of existing laws with the constitution, was established to focus attention on the elimination of gender-related legal disparities between men and women.

In 1992, the Namibian Parliament ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). In 1997, following the Beijing Conference, a National Gender Policy was launched providing for the creation of monitoring mechanisms to oversee the implementation of the 10 critical areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action that include a gender Commission, Gender Focal Points, Gender Sectoral Committees, and a Gender Network Coordinating Committee and the SADC Gender and Development Protocol ratified.

### **3.0 Gender and the Economic Empowerment of Disadvantaged Groups**

#### **3.1 The Country Context**

Namibia is faced by many economic and social problems ranging from poverty, unemployment, inadequate pensions, lack of food security and potable water, lack of adequate and accessible health care, affordable housing or even child benefits (USAID 2000c: 40). The fragile ecological state of the country, the deforestation, and periodic droughts are a constant and continuing challenge. In all this, Namibia's liberal economic framework and its investments in infrastructure are beginning to bear fruit (USAID 2002: 7). The economy, formerly heavily dependent on the extraction and process of minerals for export account for 20% of GDP, is now being overtaken by processing and manufacturing in foreign direct investment. Namibia, however, has to import a large amount of its food, even though half the population depends on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood.

The average per capita of US\$ 2000, five times that of most of Africa's poorest countries, masks enormous inequities inherited from the pre-independence period with 65% of the population subsisting on less than \$150 a year. Over half of the population lives below the poverty line, the lowest 55% coming overwhelmingly from the black population.

Most Namibians live in pronounced poverty because of large-scale unemployment, great inequality of income distribution and the large amount of wealth going to foreigners. Namibia, the driest country in sub-Saharan Africa with only 1% (8% from Jones) arable land, has agriculture as a key economic focus employing 40% of the population but accounting for only 6% of the GDP. Much of the traditional agricultural sector appears to be in decline and there is increasing pressure to move off the land increasing the drift to urban areas where there is a shortage of formal wage opportunities. Eliminating these disparities between 13 language/ethnic groups, between regions and between rural and urban areas is the major concern for the government of Namibia. Public spending patterns have so far not addressed these inequalities.

##### *3.1.1 Poverty and Employment*

Poverty is a critical factor in Namibia's development with pregnant adolescents often coming from poor families who have no employment skills. 40% children are malnourished in the northern regions. Unemployment is estimated at 35% with 40.5% women unemployed compared to 29.1% among men (GRN/UNICEF 2000: 7) with the combined unemployed/underemployed rate in the country set over 60%. Female-headed households is high (over 33% of rural households) with 41% relying on subsistence agriculture as the main source of income.

The Khomas region, dominated by the capital Windhoek, has three times the national average income levels and higher education levels and health services. 72,000 civil servants live and work in the capital (Bauer: 27). The formal employment sector women

represent 31% of the work force and are primarily concentrated in careers such as nursing, teaching, secretarial clerical work and other low paid jobs (Koep 2002a: 8). Many others are in the informal sector, work as domestic helpers and as farm laborers on commercial farms where they lack job security and their health and safety is neglected.

### *3.1.2 Entrepreneurship*

Rural entrepreneurship, mainly trade in cattle and commodities, an integral aspect of indigenous population groups has provided to be a key economic support of rural communities. In urban areas, self employed women, just like the men, lack management skills, training, information on marketing and access to credit.

Unequal gender relations and unequal access to economic resources means that women tend to be poorer than men. Women's continued vulnerability to violence and sexual abuse continues to restrict their movements and affect their economic opportunities. Increasing enterprise formation and expansion provides the best option for laying the basis for expanding the workforce. There is a general recognition that women, as a group, constitute a major section of the community that have been disadvantaged at several levels including the effects of sexism, patriarchy and racism.

It is unclear what the gender breakdown is of the 20,000 new entrants into the job market graduating from schools each year. The GRN has a mere 4,000-job slots available making job creation the leading GRN priority.

### ***3.2 Strategic Objective #1: Economic Empowerment of Historically Disadvantaged Namibians through Accelerated Private Sector Growth***

In 2000, USAID shifted its focus from a human resources development (HRD) training strategy to specifically promote the competitiveness of HDN-owned small and medium enterprises in the region and globally. The new program will provide management training and business consulting assistance directly to entrepreneurs and help Namibian companies better penetrate regional and international markets. The HDN human capital base is growing after years of major investments in basic education.

The HRD strategy that provided direct support to mainstream, large Namibian firms with the objective of enhancing in-house HRD and affirmative actions. Through depending its efforts with the private and in partnership with the Namibia Chamber of Commerce (NCCI), a new target was identified that focused on "up-scale HDN entrepreneurs", especially those from the north.

In linkages with SO#3, private sector support to benefit HDNs from sustainable local management of natural resources was also embarked upon in which income generated from NRM activities financed a variety of private, community level entrepreneurial activities, mostly at the micro-level. The GTN program is expected to facilitate the creation of business partnerships between small and medium sized U.S. companies and offshore developing country entrepreneurs.

### 3.3 Emerging Gender Issues

Under the old human resources development strategy both women and men, especially in middle management, received training, and reports from some of the activities reflect that 35% of the beneficiaries were women. Because the new SME strengthening program has just recently moved into full implementation, it is difficult at this stage to assess the impact on gender. However, the following issues emerge for the current business development strategy:

- *Limited Access to Credit:* With most of the HDN in micro-, small- and medium enterprises, access to SME credit for start-up and expansion is a specific problem that needs to be addressed head-on by the mission if it desires to have gender impact in enterprise development.
- *Affirmative Action:* The Mission has already taken steps to introduce Namibian firms to diversity promotion programs for women and racial minorities. Unfortunately, there are no gender targets set that will provide a sense of how these are being effected and what the anticipated gender impacts will be.
- *Unpackaging the term “Namibian Youth”:* It is difficult to estimate the gender variable of the unemployed youth, early school-leavers and graduates of the tenth and twelve grade levels. Taking into account the decreasing numbers of girls in the higher grades noted in the NDP2, it is important that the implementers of the SO guard carefully from assuming that the pool of girls will continue to be equal to that of boys over the life of the program. There’s therefore need to bring more visibility to the gender-specific targets that have been identified on developing entrepreneurship amongst the youth to mitigate against potential negative impacts on female entrepreneurship development.

### 3.4 Programming Recommendations

- *Access to Credit:* Explore ways to promoting credit services. At the level that mission has chosen to operate it should not be difficult to identify a PVO experienced in lending to small to medium sized enterprises, and start-ups. A pilot over an 18-month period would illustrate whether this is viable. Further, there are clear linkages with providing access to credit and empowering women in decision-making, opening up avenues of possible linkages with the HIV/AIDS program.
- *Strengthening and Broadening the Namibian Monitor:* aggressive promotion of the program will provide clear benefits to the Mission on staff upgrading and advancement efforts on mandated affirmative action plans for gender impact.
- *Junior Achievement:* This is anticipated to reach 2000 “youth” per year and 10,000 in 5 years to encourage entrepreneurship of which it is anticipated that 40% - 50% will be female. It is necessary to unpackage these terms and keep good gender disaggregated data to inform on program management.
- *Tracking Data:* Overall, the SO will need to strengthen the tracking of data by gender.

## **4.0 Gender and Education**

### **4.1 Country Context**

At independence the GRN merged 11 educational systems created by apartheid into one within a year. Enrollment in schools increased by over 50%, 2,700 classrooms were built and 400 renovated. By 1998, new curricula for grades 1–12 had been introduced. The government has committed more than 20% of its annual budget to the provision of basic social services, in particular, education and health. As a result, primary school education now stands at 93% with no dramatic disparities between boys and girls at primary school enrollment. (GRN/UNICEF Master Plan of Operations 2002 – 2005).

#### *4.1.1 Access to education*

There are nearly 1500 schools, nearly one thousand of which are classified as primary schools in the country. The net enrollment ratio for girls was 95.9% in 1995 and 95.5% in 1999, a high enough figure that at the start of each school year there were reports of children who could not find school places prompting the appointment of a special force to investigate the situation. Expansion of access to learners from marginalized groups has lagged behind the general increase in enrollment necessitating the launching of two programs in the Otjozondjupa and Kunene regions for the San and Himba children.

#### *4.1.2 Attrition rates*

From statistics provided in the (NDP2 pp.408) for 1994 - 1999, there is 100% retention in grade I, 5% attrition in grade II, an average 8% attrition in grade III and close to 15% in grade IV, after which, the numbers drop drastically, to over 55% attrition by grade 10. A total of 20% or more of the learners from grades 1-9 either repeating or dropping out there is a high level of wastage. Girls' promotion rates are better than for boys in grades 1-6, when boys begin to perform better. Conversely, repetition and school leaving rates are higher for boys than they are for girls in grades 1-6 and higher for girls in grades 8-11.

#### *4.1.2 Adult Literacy*

The adult literacy rate is a surprising 81.4% with very high rates in Erongo, Karas, and Khomas, and even higher in the northern regions of Omusati, Oshikoto and Oshana, going up to between 82% – 85% (USAIDb: 25) reflecting the post independence increase in school enrollment across all regions. 2001 census data reveals that over 90% Namibian women and almost 90% men now have some formal schooling, and 50% have attended some secondary school. Within these national statistics there lies the disparities among groups with very low literacy levels such as the San.

### **4.2 Strategic Objective #2: *Improved Delivery of Quality Education to Grade 1-4 Learners in the Most Disadvantaged Schools***

USAID directly supports the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture in educational reform and in improving the quality of education available to Namibians in the most disadvantaged regions of the country. In taking a teacher-focused approach to education, USAID has supported the training of over 2,600 teachers in the use of new learner-centered instructional and assessment materials that have been introduced into 500 schools. This is now shifting to a new focus that will be on school-centered management improvements, as well as the strengthening of communities and parental involvement in the education process, ICT and HIV impact mitigation.

USAID also supported the Ministry to produce and nationally disseminate the 1999-2001 statistics on schools, teachers, enrollment, learner flow, examination results, facilities and literacy programs. Further, through USAID support, communities are mobilizing and actively participating in children's education and in formulating plans for improving the schools. As a result the pace of BES School Improvement grants have accelerated and 28 grants totaling US\$110,000 have been disbursed. The school improvement program supporting teams of lower primary advisory teachers, inspectors, etc now exceed two-thirds of the target districts and the professional capacity of 32 ministry decision makers was strengthened. New ICT programs through GDA alliances in the education sector were launched with a total of \$1.5 million of USAID funding that will focus on the use of ICTs as an educational tool, particularly in remote areas.

### **4.3 Emerging Gender Issues**

- *Taking a gender-neutral approach:* The use of gender-neutral language such as: learners, teachers; school managers, extension workers, adult learners, all this masks the gender impact of interventions and does not demonstrate the unintended impacts of activities.
- *Defining Equity beyond regions:* achieving equity is defined in the distribution of resources to regions. The UNICEF support to Girl Child Education in the Kavango is the only attempt to address gender variables in education.
- *The impact of HIV/AIDS on girls and boys:* In 1999, estimates indicated that girls aged between 15–19 had a 12% prevalence rate (which dropped to 11% in 200-2002) while the age of sexual debut in boys is a young 15.09% (Johns Hopkins Survey). This strengthens the call for expanding the program to have a dimension on student specific issues.

### **4.4 Programmatic Recommendations**

- *The teacher-focused, parent-involvement and efficient administration approach has it gender-advancement limitations:* Other than ensuring that there is some gender equity in recruitment and training of teachers, following which female teachers may progress to becoming role models for young girls, there are very few opportunities, other than at broad policy levels, for advancing gender equity in education within a strategy that does not focus on children.
- *Improve Impact Data:* Support the Ministry of Education or UNICEF in tracking follow-up after grade 4 to understand why boys leave school early and why girls do

not finish school. Where do they go? Is there anything USAID can do in the early stages of schooling to reverse this trend?

- *Tracking data on teachers:* There's anecdotal evidence that USAID reaches more women teachers in the program than men and that they're more women in Circuit Support Teams (Circuit Inspectors, Advisory Teachers and Resource Teachers) than men. Unfortunately, the mission does not collect that type of data, hence cannot provide precise information in this regard. In assessing overall impact of the program it will be useful for the mission to begin collecting gender-disaggregated data to inform implementation of the program.
- *Encourage Enforcement of the Interrupted Education National Policy:* While there is a government policy on interrupted education the stigma around returning to school after having had a child contributes to many girls opting to stay out of the classroom despite repeated calls by supportive principals and communities. Because of this, various education regions have had various degrees of success in implementing this policy. Implementation strategies for this policy are important if girls and boys forced to leave school either to care for the terminally ill, are pregnant, or even for economic reasons such as being required to look after the family cattle.

## **5.0 Gender and the Environment**

### **5.1 Country Context**

Namibia, classified as desert or semi desert, is home to virtually every variety of wildlife for which Africa is famous. In 1996 Namibia enacted an amendment to the Namibian Nature Conservancies Act of 1975 providing one of the most progressive policy environments for community based natural resource management in southern Africa. 15 conservancies have since been recognized by the government putting nearly 4 million hectares of communal land under the control of conservancy management committees. Another 34 communities are in various stages of forming conservancies. In 2002, over US\$1.1 million was earned by conservancies, which was double the amount gained in 2001, the earnings of which come from community-owned and operated tourism enterprises such as lodges, campsites and craft centers (USAID/N 2002). 20% of the earnings were from joint venture lodges with the private sector. The conservancies have also led to increased wildlife, as documented in the Kunene Region. In the Caprivi Region, illegal hunting has dropped by over 50%.

These conservancies have contributed to strengthening Namibia democratic culture at the grassroots levels where a strong emphasis is placed on the election of women leaders on the conservancy management committees, currently accounting for 30%, up from 25% last year, and targeted to increase to 40% by 2004. The ecological challenges presented by the arid and semi-arid environment have restricted the number of people who can be supported by traditional agriculture. Historical political factors have shaped the pattern of habitation and contributed to the general degradation of natural resources. Poverty has further aggravated the resource base by heavy dependency on the immediate environment to meet survival needs. In Kavango and Caprivi, forests have been cut down, livestock and goats are overgrazing the grasslands. This environmental deterioration mostly impacts on women and children who predominate in rural areas.

Great strides have been made in gender balance of the CBNRM program at the national level. Over the last ten years, the leadership of CBNRM has moved from being primarily white males to primarily black females. At the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the two major contacts for CBNRM are both black females. In the Namibian Association of CBNRM Service Organization (NACSO) all four of the staff are black women. At the conservancy level, only one Conservancy chair is a female, but it is the largest conservancy with 32,000 members. One joint venture has turned over the management of an up-scale safari camp to the community – a woman from that same community. Overcoming the gender gap is a lengthy process in Namibia especially with ethnic and racial gaps which also need to be addressed. CBNRM in Namibia is making steady progress in gender equality because it is committed to gender equity.

**5.2 Strategic Objective #3: *(NEW) Improved livelihoods of communal conservancy members through sustainable integrated natural resource management.***

USAID's area of interest is in CBNRM, which Namibia is considered to have one of the best and most progressive policy frameworks in Africa. It seeks to redress past inequities by giving people in the communal areas the same rights to benefit economically from the wildlife as the people living in freehold areas by providing the legal basis for establishing conservancies. While conservancy rights over the wildlife have mostly been honored, rights over other renewable resources are yet to be legislated. Further, the economic benefits of CBNRMs are just beginning to be realized.

Future program directions include continuing with the institutional development to ensure long-term sustainability; furthering efforts to help conservancies reap economic benefits from their natural resources; help conservancies play a role in the sustainable, integrated management of other complementary natural resources such as forests, water, fish and grazing land; and deepening the role that conservancies play in strengthening civil society's role in local, regional and national government.

### **5.3 Emerging Gender Issues**

- *Tracking Income Use:* Women are deriving concrete benefits in the form of cash, training and job opportunities, all of which contribute to breaking down gender barriers. It will be useful for the mission to track income derived from conservancies by use and gender.
- *Women's Leadership and Decision-Making:* The Namibian Association of CBNRM support Organizations, NASCO, and its partners have placed great emphasis of building gender equity into CBNRM programs by ensuring that women have voice in decision-making processes, stand for elections for Conservancy Management Committees and benefit from capacity development and training. The numbers of elected female officials has grown steadily and Uukwaluudhi Conservancy boasts the first chair of a conservancy committee. At the same time the game guard system was established, which primarily employs males to monitor and manage wildlife, the resource Monitors System was also established which hires females to monitor palm for basketry, thatching grass, and veldt foods. There are now two women serving as game guards in the Kunene Region and who carry out the same tasks as the men. Demonstrating that communities appear to have come to value the diversity of perspectives on decision-making.

### **5.4 Programmatic Recommendations**

- *Analyze the data collected by the WILD Research Project:* This data focused on assessing livelihood improvements a year and half ago before many of the conservancies were earning benefits. The data provides an excellent foundation for baseline data already disaggregated and which could be built upon in future program years.

- *Using the Conservancy Management Committees as a conduit for public education programs:* Both HIV/AIDS, gender considerations, adult education and other community specific issues can be dealt with through the CBNRM set up.
- *Encourage women leaders in conservancies to organize themselves:* This will allow them to continue building on the skills that they learned while in leadership and enable them to position themselves better for other community or public leadership roles.
- *Utilize women who received training and experience while serving on the Conservancy Management Committee:* Women (and men) who have been voted off the Conservancy Management Committee should be given new roles that strengthen their leadership positions in the community. Perhaps as conduits for education – as noted above – or perhaps to be recipients of further training e.g. entrepreneurship, marketing, computer skills, etc.
- *Engage women, especially female headed-households, in culturally accepted ways at the sub-conservancy level.* Women who are too shy or feel they are not wanted at formal meetings, should be given other chances of making their voices heard, e.g. hold separate women’s meetings prior to formal meetings, set quotas for women’s participation at certain meetings, select one women from each village to represent the views of women in that village, etc.

## **6.0 Gender Issues within the Political Context**

### **6.1 Country Context**

#### 6.1.1 Issues of Governance

Despite fundamental political and legislative changes and far-reaching administrative transformation, Namibia's history continues to impact on all aspects of life. Women have made significant progress in the political front. Traditionally regarded as legal minors (LeBeau 2001: 4) women have come to the fore through progressive women's movements and political participation. In 2001, women made up 40% of local councilors in the local authorities and 25% of the members of Parliament in the National Assembly, although this is contrasted by having only 4% women in the regional councils and only two out of 26 in the National Council (Bauer: 29). These high percentages are directly attributable to the use of electoral quotas and the electoral mechanism, a closed list of proportional representation that is used. In the regional council elections using the plurality "winner take all" method, women have not performed so well.

The amendment and strengthening of the Local Authority Act in 1997 paved the way for mandating that 30% of all candidates in local authority elections be women. Political parties have voluntarily complied with the request as is evidenced by the numbers. The lack of a similar national level mandate resulted in the 1999 drafting of a "*Women's Manifesto*" by a network of non-governmental and women's organizations, demanding, *inter alia*, that 50% of all candidates in national elections be women to which, once again, political parties voluntarily complied.

#### *6.1.2 The Legal Context*

The Namibian Constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Immediately upon independence, discrimination against women in tax and labor laws was removed and a new Labor Act prohibited discrimination in all aspects of employment. The Act also incorporates a variety of forms for maternity protection including twelve weeks maternity leave for all women working for the same employer for at least one year. Unfortunately, gender inequality continues under the civil and customary law on marriage and inheritance despite constitutional guarantees that there are equal rights in marriage. The controversial Married Person's Equality Bill addressed, head on, conventional practices regarding the unbalanced, gender-related, exercise of domestic powers and control of assets.

New Laws that include the Combating Rape Act, have been received with much acclaim for broadening the definition of rape and providing equal protection to men, women, boys and girls; the envisaged Communal Land Reform Bill, which, when passed, will give women greater access to communal land by treating men and women equally in the allocation of communal land is additionally expected to provide protection to widows; the draft Law of Domestic Violence presently before the National Assembly; and a draft Law

on the recognition of customary marriages which continues to skew gender equality despite constitutional guarantees that there are equal rights in marriage.

### *6.1.3 Political Participation*

There is political commitment to gender equality and an enabling environment and legal framework of principles and rights that affirm gender equality. Stereotyping, attitudes and prejudices against women as leaders within patriarchal systems continues to be a specific barrier to participation. Sexual harassment is still used as a deterrent to female political participation, and voter education needs to take into account that women's mobilization threatens established power structures, such as traditional leaders. SWAPO has effectively used the "zebra" list – alternating male and female candidates – for local government elections. This, in turn, resulted in the 1999 drafting of a "*Women's Manifesto Network*" (WMN) by a network of non-governmental and women's organizations, demanding, *inter alia*, that 50% of all candidates in national elections be women, a decision to which all political parties voluntarily complied, but have not applied uniformly.

### *6.1.4 Affirmative Action*

This provision that affirmative action be effected applied to the first two local government elections. There are, however, perceptions that local government is "not really about 'politics' but about community issues" (Hubbard 2001: 2) and thus more suited to women than the higher levels of government. While this might explain the local level numbers, it can only serve as a partial justification, as it fails to take into account that national level female representation is higher than at the regional levels.

### *6.1.5 Civil Society*

Civil society in Namibia is still quite weak and does not effectively take up spaces opening up to participate in shaping laws and the national institutions that are still emerging. In a 1999 analysis by the Southern Africa Democracy Barometer, Namibia was classified as the only country where supply of democracy-outstripped demand. The women's movement, despite being relatively active and vocal around some key issues, is hampered in its effectiveness by divisions along race lines, party-political affiliation and homophobia, making it difficult to define and implement a common agenda. That said, as a result of the 50/50 campaign, conducted by the WMN, and coordinated by a local NGO, Sister Namibia, great strides have been made towards bringing women together on a common platform.

### *6.1.6 Violence Against Women*

The position of women relative to men with regard to decision-making and power is increasingly being viewed against the widespread prevalence of violence against women and children. This poses a significant challenge to any undertaking geared to addressing gender-related disparities. There is evidence of indiscriminate physical and sexual abuse of women of all ages and boy and girl children, often linked to high levels of alcohol abuse, social degradation, unemployment and poverty, as well as to cultural attitudes that

support the use of force in effecting compliance. The official response has been muted and ineffective at best. Cultural attitudes held by men and many women play a major role in apportioning blame to women who suffer violence rather on the male aggressors. Tacit acceptance of stereotypical views of gender roles lead to a passive accommodation of male aggression and promiscuity, which, in turn, provides a foundation for the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS. This linkage has been recognized and the issue of violence against women has been a rallying point for the women's movement in Namibia and has been one of the few common themes to bring women together across party lines. It is generally accepted that addressing the violence problem must accompany any parallel efforts to increase women's participation in political life.

## **6. 2 Strategic Objective #4: *Increased Accountability of Parliament to All Namibian Citizens***

USAID is assisting both houses of the Namibian Parliament in their efforts to improve the capacity of MPs and staff to effect the legislative process and carry out their representative and oversight roles in more transparent and accountable ways. USAID has assisted the Parliament in the implementation of its institutional development guideline document, "Agenda for Change", and in its efforts to increase citizen participation through a targeted constituency outreach program and is also supporting civil society organizations with their public policy advocacy efforts through institutional development and technical assistance.

In this process, USAID has helped the Namibian WMN bring together and mobilize under one umbrella on issues affecting women and children and has supported the Katutura Community Radio Station's efforts to improve citizen awareness and generate discussions on parliamentary actions. Support has been provided to an association of municipal officers to improve integrity systems at local level. Conservancies formed in the rural areas under USAID's Community Based Natural Resource Management Program are being assisted in strengthening governance structures, increasing female representation, as well as in their efforts to form appropriate alliances and/or associations to represent community-specific interests and concerns.

In preparation for the 2003 local and regional, and 2004 national and presidential elections, support is being provided, together with Swedish and Dutch funding, to an NGO Electoral Support consortium, under the coordination of the Electoral Commission of Namibia, to conduct a civic and voter education program. The envisaged activities are being designed to take the differentiated needs of various groups into consideration, with gender featuring prominently as a cross-cutting issue in the planning

In the new strategy, USAID envisages strengthening on-going programs, especially those that will support the reciprocal linking of civil society to outreach structures and communication mechanisms emanating from government at national, regional and local levels.. Capacity building , organizational development, and advocacy training will remain key components of the program.

### 6.3 Emerging Gender Issues

- *Participation:* Numbers are not enough. Women who rise through party ranks rarely have the opportunity to develop political skills required and thus often lack the ability to influence the party or public policy effectively. Encourage the present efforts and attempts at caucusing across political lines. Effective networking skills are also useful.
- *Confidence Building:* How do the different genders perform in Parliamentary debate? What role do they play in their respective political parties?
- *Advocacy agenda:* Support long-term advocacy programs that'll help focus organizations and assist them in defining an organizational identity and building a larger support base.
- *Affirmative Action:* Limited and not clearly understood.
- *Violence Against Women:* On the one hand, the threat of violence is a possible deterrent to women seeking public positions and specifically to those who want to engage in politics. On the other hand, the issue is a potential rallying point to mobilize women (and men) on a bi-partisan basis.

### 6.4 Programmatic Recommendations

- *Electoral Support:*
  - 1) *The anticipated assessment to determine Namibia's experience during the elections* should include a specific gender focus;
  - 2) *Registration:* Note where there is accessibility of registration centers, focus on protecting the rights of illiterate women, and find out whether registers indicate the sex of registered voters?
  - 3) Continue to support gender-sensitive design and implementation of election-related activities (including the production of appropriate materials and dissemination methods).
- *The Parliamentary Research Center:*
  - 1) Could assist mission identify which gender, budgetary, etc. issues, and by whom they are researched and taken to parliament.
  - 2) Support efforts to conduct "gender budget analyses".
- *Violence Against Women:*
  - 1) Strengthen NGOs that address the issue of Violence against Women, including men's groups that have taken up the cause.
  - 2) Support efforts from civil society to address root causes and address the Violence/HIV/AIDS/Gender linkages.
- *Leadership Training:* Needs to be broadened to enhance capacity building of women leaders and training on how to contest elections.

## **7.0 The Gender Implications of HIV/AIDS**

### **7.1 Country Context**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is growing with alarming speed. Namibia is ranked as one of the most HIV affected countries in the world, with a 23.3 percent prevalence for pregnant women. As of 2003, the MoHSS estimates that there are 250,000 cases of HIV infection. Gains made since independence have diminished due to the impact of HIV/AIDS. Maternal mortality rate remains high at 271 per 100,000 live births, life expectancy which had risen by 20% since 1992 (ref: mission personnel) reflecting the fact that Namibia is one of the most severely HIV infected countries in the world.

The relationship of gender and HIV/AIDS reveals that the transformation of gender relations is fundamental to effectively addressing the epidemic. The disease develops within specific social contexts. Historical factors such as apartheid, exploitation, migrant labor systems, war and other conflicts, all have critical consequences of how people live and structure their lives. Cultural expectations and beliefs are all contributing factors to the vulnerability of individuals and communities.

In Namibia, as in most countries, women and girls are bearing the brunt of the disease in terms of HIV infection, the stigmatization that results in them taking the blame, and the increasing burden of family support and care. In many instances, disclosure of HIV status is also likely to result on violence, abuse, or abandonment by families, and even the possible loss of rights to children and property (UN/DAW: 2000).

#### *7.1.2 Sex, gender and sexuality*

While sex refers to the biological differences between men and women, gender describes the socially constructed roles and sexuality is defined by who an individual has sex with, and how. In all these, power is central to the expression of gender and sexuality and affects the individual autonomy and the sense of self. Gender divisions are created by different economic opportunities, roles and expectations in society. Women's economic dependence on men seriously compromises their ability to negotiate sex or leave risky relationships. Further, women's lack of autonomy over their own bodies often results in life decisions affecting their well-being being taken without their consent.

#### *7.1.3 Poverty and economic rights*

Women's unequal access to economic resources and their economic dependence on men means that they are unable to negotiate safe sex. Many women in Namibia are forced to resort to exchanging sex for survival as men provide them with the necessary goods such as income, shelter, fees, etc. in return for sexual access. This vulnerability is increased by the economic sphere in which women operate. Many women are to be found in the informal sectors where there's little or no legal protection thus increasing their vulnerability to poverty, and therefore to HIV infection. The violence Against Women

Bill, recently passed, offers opportunities for protection and reduced vulnerability when it is widely applied and effected.

#### *7.1.4 Sexuality and Power*

While women's physiology places them at greater risk of infection it is their lack of power over their own bodies and their sexuality, further reinforced by their lack of social and economic equality that makes them vulnerable to contracting HIV. Cultural, religious practices and poverty further contribute to women's special vulnerability. Gender roles of masculinity encourage men to have multiple partners and engage in sexual risk-taking behavior. Social construction of femininity generally stipulates that women's sexuality should be invisible and that it needs to be controlled. Gender becomes critical to an understanding of HIV/AIDS and the levels of inequality that shape vulnerability to infection and the personal, social and economic impact of the disease. Women's and girls' relative lack of power over their bodies and their sexual lives, reinforced by their social and economic inequality makes them highly vulnerable to contracting HIV/AIDS.

#### *7.1.5 Stigma and Discrimination*

Women tend to be blamed as the vectors of the epidemic to partners and children. Sexual stereotypes are reinforced in HIV-positive women who are characterized as promiscuous and immoral. There is evidence in Windhoek that vulnerable groups such as sex workers or those in homosexual relationships are subject to marginalization and public censure. In the workplace, fear of stigmatization forces many to avoid knowledge or acknowledge a positive status because of fear of discrimination.

#### *7.1.6 Women as Care Givers*

State inability to provide health care to cope with the demands of caring for infected people has pushed the burden onto women and girls with serious consequences on their physical, social and economic well being. The demands of caring for the terminally ill, especially in the already economically deprived areas of the north, results in women's loss in terms of productivity and livelihood.

#### *7.1.7 Gender-based Violence*

Myths in southern Africa in general, such as having sex with virgins will cure you of HIV have resulted in the rise of rape and sexual abuse cases in South Africa and Namibia. Young women and girls are facing special risks with regard to sexual violence and HIV/AIDS infection because of the widespread belief that sex with a virgin can cleanse a man of infection. This puts young girls at an enhanced risk of rape and sexual coercion because of the perception that they are free of the infection. Violent and coerced sex can also increase a women's biological vulnerability to HIV because of damage to membranes of the genital area. Violence against women contributes directly to women's vulnerability to HIV and their ability to cope and is deeply rooted in stereotypical gender

beliefs and roles. Physical violence, or the threat of it and the fear of abandonment are significant barriers to the negotiation of the use of a condom. In situations of rape, gender inequalities can limit women access to treatment, care and support.

## **7.2 Strategic Objective #5: *New HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care Initiative***

USAID's new strategy will seek to strengthen Namibian efforts to build holistic, community-based responses to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Assistance will be provided for the comprehensive care and support of PLWAs, vulnerable children, families and including education of orphans and vulnerable children, prevention programs in municipalities and workplaces including specifically the transportation sector (truck drivers and commercial sex workers). Future programming will take into account strengthening PMTCT and VCT programs with a special emphasis on family planning for HIV+ women and developing programs for the delay of sexual debut for youth targeting young girls.

## **7.3 Emerging Gender Issues**

- *Females are getting infected at a younger age than males:* The differential infection rates across different age groups suggests the need for specific target group messages. The fact that females are more easily infected than the males strengthens this fact. Young women and girls are at risk for biological reasons but especially because of societal and cultural pressures.
- *Sex is a currency:* Girls and women, in this male dominated environment, are expected to pay for their shelter, food, and goods. Most sex work in Africa is survival sex as a form of small-scale informal income generation.
- *Sexual violence:* In the home and in schools, sexual violence against girls and children is on the increase. This is a crisis that cannot be ignored.
- *PMTCT:* Access to relatively inexpensive drugs and exclusive breast-feeding can reduce MTCT infections. These drugs may be denied to all those poor women with no health insurance and who may not have the money to buy formula feed, but who may have another option when the new Presidential Initiative on PMTCT is implemented.
- *Alcohol consumption:* Is an increasing problem in Namibia (MoHSS and Ministry of Agriculture KAP Baseline Study on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, March 2002) and is perceived as a contributing factor to increasing violence against girls and women correspondingly in HIV infection.
- *Home Based Care:* Continues to be a burden on women's time, resources, and physical well-being.

## **7.4 Programmatic Recommendations**

- Focus on developing gender-sensitive approaches to respond to different needs of individuals based on their gender and sexuality by developing interventions involving men and women. These may include: sensitization of young boys and girls in school,

income-generation programs for girls and women, ensuring access to legal remedies, , provision of female condoms for high-risk populations.

- Programs to promote the delay of sexual debut should be highlighted.
- Design empowerment programs for young girls and women: this refers to both collective and personal empowerment and includes building positive self-image and self-confidence; building group cohesion and fostering decision-making action.
- Promote equity in care and support giving responsibilities through public and positive messages.
- Develop programs to address gender-based violence and alcohol abuse.

## 8.0 Mainstreaming Gender in USAID/Namibia Strategy

In dealing the overwhelming need to re-address economic, social and racial inequities that characterize Namibia, the Mission the big picture resulting in a gender neutral approach in its program. This is particularly evident in the private sector development, education and HIV/AIDS sectors. In the DG sector and CBNRM, more opportunities presented themselves but while the approach has been a little bit more systematic it is still not targeted to a strategic result. The focus on promoting women in decision-making has borne fruit but could be broadened to ensure broad gender impacts.

### 8.1 Opportunities for Mission-Wide Gender Mainstreaming

- *Implement Gender-based Analysis throughout the design and implementation process:* there's a need to put forward a systematic process to inform and guide future programming by assessing any potential differential impact on women and men. Hence, this objective underpins all subsequent objectives.
- *Identify gender specific indicators:* This will allow focusing on gender issues with a definite target and results.
- *Provide training and TA:* Mission personnel and implementing partners need to agree on a common approach to gender results.
- *Equitable representation should be identified as a strategic approach as a cross-cutting theme to promote gender equity.*
- *Develop a Mission-wide gender strategy to focus efforts and ensure accountability.*
- *Disaggregate all data, not just training and workshops.*
- *Develop Cross-cutting programs to address Violence against Women and Children:* strengthen existing measures to reduce violence against women within the overall context of justice, health, human rights and HIV/AIDS.

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